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AN
ADDRESS TO WOMEN

BY

HARVEY GOODWIN, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF CARLISLE,
HONORARY FELLOW OF GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

LONDON :
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS, W.C. ;
43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C. ;
26, ST. GEORGE'S PLACE, HYDE PARK CORNER, S.W.
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ADVERTISEMENT.

On the day after the conclusion of the Church Congress in Carlisle a meeting of working women was held in the Congress Hall. About three thousand were present. I spoke to them with others, and my address was made public through the local newspapers. Many requests have been made to me, that I would permit what was said to appear in the form of a Tract; and I have therefore revised a newspaper report, and present the substance of my address in the following pages.

H. CARLISLE.

ROSE CASTLE,
October, 1884.

AN ADDRESS TO WOMEN.

I NEVER before had the opportunity or the pleasure of addressing an immense assemblage containing none but women; and you know that when we undertake to do a thing for the first time, we are apt to do it clumsily. If any one of you were put to a job to which you were not accustomed, say the making of a bonnet, or the making of a pudding, there would be some danger that the bonnet would not fit, and that the pudding might be a little heavy; therefore as I am fresh at this business, you will, I am sure, make every allowance for me. I will do my best; and you will pardon my defects, even though my pudding should be a little heavy.

It was, I suppose, a sense of justice which led me to suggest to the committee of the Church Congress, that we should give you girls and women an evening, as we gave an evening to the men. Why should we not? You are just as

good ; I should not be the least surprised if you were a good deal better. At all events you have as much right to be talked to, if you are willing. I know you like talking yourselves ; but if you like to be talked to as well, I do not see why you should not. And if we by talking to you can give you a little innocent pleasure, and do you a little good, I think that you and we shall have spent a tolerably useful Saturday evening.

In a certain sense men and women are equal ; but there is nevertheless a good deal of difference between the two. There are some things that a man can do, and you cannot do ; and on the other hand, there are a number of things that you can do and men cannot do. I am old-fashioned enough to think it a wise thing that men should be men, and women should be women. It is too much the fashion, I think, with some women to make themselves as like men as they possibly can. That is a mistake. There are a great many things which a man has to do, and which you have not to do. If there was a sack of coals to be carried to the other end of Carlisle, I should choose a man rather than any one of you to carry it. That is man's work ; and the best arrangement is that the man should do that which is appropriate to him, and the woman should do that



which is appropriate to her. It is the man's business to work hard for the family, and the woman's business to keep a clean and tidy home; and you may depend upon it that one of those businesses is quite as important as the other. But there is a sense, and a very high and important sense, in which there is a perfect equality between man and woman. They are equal in the sight of God. God made man, and God made woman to be his companion; and both one and the other stand before Him as conscious responsible beings, made in His own image.

There is one point which I should like very much to press upon you in speaking of the likeness and the difference between men and women. Women have a power which men cannot possibly have. They are the mothers of the people of England. You, women, have the chief charge of young English men and young English women during the most impressible time of life. You have the moulding of the character of those who are to form the next generation. I have a feeling concerning mothers amounting almost to superstition. I think there is nothing in the world like the pure love and the mighty influence of a mother. Let me illustrate the point from my own heart and my own experience.

I am one of those who have lost their mothers at a very early age. I was somewhat over six years old when my dear mother was suddenly taken from me. I mention my age that I may put before you with the more force the effect which my mother's teaching had upon me; when you bear in mind the tender age at which it ceased, I think you may draw from what I tell you some useful lessons. When I look back to the teaching of my mother, what do I think of it? I say deliberately, and without any sense of exaggeration, that though I have since that time been at school, been under tutors, been at college, and had all the experience of life, I do not believe that all the lessons I have received put together amount in value and in importance to the lessons which I learned from my mother before I was seven years old. What did she teach me? She did not put me through the fifth or the sixth Standard—we had not any standards in those days; but she taught me a great many things which it was very good for me to learn.

One of the first lessons she taught me was this—always to speak the truth; and the lesson she gave me concerning truth has never been lost upon me. She brought me up in the feeling that what was to be spoken was to be always

the whole truth and nothing but the truth; that there was to be no evasion; that everything was to be stated simply and honestly, exactly as it occurred; and I will tell you how she enforced that lesson—she always spoke the truth to me. I never caught her in any kind of deceit. I always knew that what she said to me she meant. I was sure that if she told me she was going to do a thing she would do it, and that no amount of coaxing or persuasion would lead her to change her mind. Absolute truth, absolute in the smallest matters, that was her practice, and that was the lesson which she impressed upon me.

Then she taught me to say my prayers. I have as vivid a recollection now, at a distance of sixty years, as I had at the time, of the manner in which she made me kneel down at her knees, and, with her hand upon my head, taught me the simple prayers which were suitable for childhood. I remember how, when I rose up from my knees, she would gently talk to me in a manner suitable to my childish capacity. Those early lessons of prayer have never been lost to me; and I remember how that afterwards when I was at school, and when I was beset by all the temptations and the difficulties to which boys at school are submitted, when I was sleeping in

a room with boys about me who did not pray, and who laughed at those who did,—I remember well how the thought of my dear mother was like a guardian angel over me, and how it kept me from much of the evil which some of my companions would fain have pressed upon me. My mother also taught me the Church Catechism ; and I have a vivid recollection of the manner in which she made me bow my head at the name of Jesus Christ, when I repeated the Apostles' Creed. It is a good thing to be taught as a child to bow the head at that sacred name.

Again, she enforced upon me full and complete obedience. It was never enforced with a threat ; there was no unkindness, nothing arbitrary in her commands ; but I was never allowed to ask any reasons. I felt perfectly certain of the wisdom which dictated each command ; I was always taught to obey, and I had no difficulty in yielding obedience.

Lastly, I was taught by her, by practice more than by words, to keep my temper. She taught me to keep my temper by always keeping her own. I have often thought what a blessed thing it is for a child to have a mother who keeps her temper. I have sometimes seen—I know there is a great deal to vex and trouble people who have the

charge of children, and therefore I make all allowance for irritation—but I have seen a mother come out of her cottage, and being for some reason angry with her child I have heard her say, “You little wretch, when I catch you I will break every bone in your skin.” You know of course that she won’t do it; and I have no doubt that her motherly heart—for she has a motherly heart notwithstanding her rough tongue—would not allow her to do it. I daresay if I said to her, “My good woman, I am stronger than you; that is a very proper and righteous judgment, which you have passed on your little boy; and if you will allow me, I will catch him and break every bone in his skin for you,” she would reply, “You leave my child alone, Sir.” She would take the child home, and probably would give me into the hands of the first policeman she met. But the threat to the child would nevertheless be of very evil consequence; and therefore I would say to every mother—Whatever you do, take care that you never lose your temper when you are dealing with a child. It is absolutely impossible, if you do, that the child can grow up to respect his mother.

To come to another point. I have no doubt that there are many persons here who live in poor, small houses; and I have no doubt that it is a very

much more difficult thing to avoid little troubles and vexations in such places than in a large house. If there is a large house, with twelve or fourteen rooms in it, and the man and wife have a tiff, one can go into room No. 1 and the other into room No. 12; and they can keep away from each other until the storm has blown over. But poor people in cottages cannot do this. If two people quarrel in a cottage, it is a very uncomfortable kind of quarrel. You cannot easily one of you get out of the way of the other. I remember reading in one of Charles Dickens' books a little bit of fun about a couple who travelled the country—I forget their business, but it was some itinerant sort of business—and who had to live the greater part of their lives in a cart. A cart is smaller than a cottage, so that there you have to sit side by side. The man, in explaining the difficulties and uncomfortable-ness arising from the living together in a cart, used this expression—"You see aggravation in a cart is *so* aggravating." There is a great deal of philosophy in that, and I would say that "aggravation" in a cottage is much more "aggra-vating" than "aggravation" in a large house, where you can get away from it. And therefore I wish to assure you how much I sympathise in

your cottage difficulties. Poor people who have to live in cottages have an amount of trouble, an amount of trial of temper to go through, which richer people do not know very much about. In speaking to persons who live in cottages I would endeavour carefully to bear this in mind.

But take a different case. There is one thing that will happen in the best-regulated families, and that is the baby will sometimes cry. Suppose little Jack has got a bad cold, or has taken something that does not agree with him, and can't sleep, and you don't want to make him sleep by any artificial means—you don't give him Godfrey's Cordial, I hope—I am not a physician, but I know that that method is wrong—well, Jack can't sleep, and a poor woman is kept up at night, and cannot sleep because her baby is crying: there may be another child in the room: perhaps he is poorly too; then comes the inevitable six o'clock in the morning, when everybody gets up, and then the woman has her day's work before her. Perhaps she has to get dinner ready for her husband, and at the same time has her sick child to look after. It is undoubtedly a life involving a great deal of work and anxiety. I mention this not because I can tell you how this is to be cured, but because I wish to say how

much I think that persons like myself, who in God's providence have not had to suffer from poverty, ought to sympathise with you: and I trust we do sympathise with you. Poverty and its troubles cannot altogether be got out of the way; but it is something to a poor woman to know that those who are in an easier condition of life don't look down upon her, that they really feel for her, and are prepared in every way in their power to help her.

Hitherto I have been speaking chiefly about married people, about mothers and so forth; but I ought to bear in mind that our invitation was to "working women" generally, and I daresay I have got before me a large number of young women who are not married, but who all possibly may look forward to that condition at some future time. Now remember that we did not force you into this place: we merely invited you. We gave you tickets, and you have accepted the invitation, and here you are; and as you are here you are bound to listen to anything I have to say to you. The first thing I wish to say is this—that the great charm of a young woman's character is her perfect modesty. That is the thing which makes a young woman beautiful. It is not the cut of her face, the colour of her eyes, the length of her hair, the

manner in which she dresses herself, or the number of ribbons she puts on. These things do not constitute real beauty in any young woman, much less in a Christian young woman. But what does constitute beauty is pure, modest simplicity of character. Moral and spiritual qualities are those which everyone who has a high estimate of womanhood contemplates with satisfaction and delight. Therefore I say to you young women, "Whatever you do, be pure, be modest ; let your adornment be not the plaiting of your hair or the wearing of fine apparel ; but let there be a God-fearing desire to live as they should live whose bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost : bodies not permitted to be in the power of Satan, not given over to sinful lusts of the flesh, but consecrated and pure as God's temples ought to be."

And in connection with this, let me say how very, very important it is—and the importance is brought home to us by a great deal of what we know and hear—how important it is to be careful with regard to the question of temperance. A drunken man is an abomination ; but if a drunken man be an abomination and a horror in the sight of man and in the sight of God, what shall we say of a drunken woman ? And yet, my sisters, there are

such persons. I trust there are none here to-night, so don't think I am speaking personally; but there are such persons. Female drinking has increased of late years, and that which was considered almost impossible some years ago is now proved to be only too possible. How horrified one is, how one's heart is pained and vexed and grieved, when one reads of a woman being brought up before the magistrates for being drunk! And though I hope there is no woman here this evening who has given herself to the horrible vice of drunkenness, or even the habit of drinking, there must be some who are liable to be assaulted by the temptation. Therefore don't think it unkind on my part to give you a little warning. I was once talking to a man who was well informed on this subject, and I said to him, "Do you think a man who has once become a drunkard can be reformed?" "Oh, yes," he said, "I have seen many who have been drunkards, and who, by taking the pledge and by other means, have been brought back, but never a woman yet." Now that is a fearful thing. It would seem that when a woman is depraved by that horrible vice, it sinks into her gentler nature, and defiles her pure body, more completely and hopelessly than it does the rougher natures and coarser bodies of us men. Let that be a

warning to you, my dear sisters. O, resist the very first temptation to this terrible evil.

Another point about which I should wish to give you a little advice is a delicate one, but I think you will not be offended by my reference to it. It is the question of marriage. When you are going to marry, inquire whether the young man to whom you are attached—and who, I hope, will be attached to you—is sober and steady; and if he is not, then don't have him. He may say, perhaps, "I do give way sometimes, but you know, Jane, if you will only marry me, and take care of me, you are just the person to keep me right—you are my guardian angel. If you will only marry me, I shall be such an improved character that you will never have cause to find fault." I would advise you to give him this answer: "Reform yourself first; then come to me, and I will talk to you about that other little matter." Never take a fellow on trust; do not take a man who wants you to reform him. It is very much like having a hedge between you and a bull. If a bull be dangerous, keep him on the other side of the hedge; do not be deceived because he walks for a little while as if there was no harm in him. Do not undertake to tame him. Do not let him come on your side of the hedge;

keep the hedge between you. So do not take a husband until you are sure he is sober and steady.

The future of your lives, my dear young friends, much depends upon your careful, your modest, your cautious conduct with regard to this great subject. It is a subject that is often laughed about. When you talk about sweetheating everybody begins to laugh. But sweetheating for a few months means living together in a small cottage for twenty or thirty years, and that is a very serious thing. You may depend upon it, it is an unsafe undertaking to say that you will take a man for better for worse, for richer for poorer, and be his companion for life, unless you are pretty certain that he is a God-fearing man. That is the basis of all. Let a man have the love of God in his heart; let his life be conducted in the fear of God; let it be clear that his whole life is enlightened by the light of God; and then it will be safe to live with that man as your husband. The love of God and the love of man —they ever go together. Jesus Christ said that the first commandment was to love God; and that the second was like unto it, to love thy neighbour as thyself. Therefore if a man professes to love you, first be sure that he loves God; and if he

loves God then you may believe that his love for you if professed will be pure and honourable love, such as you may safely accept, and be happy in accepting.

I will conclude by saying that if you read the New Testament, as I trust you do, you will find this to be a very striking point in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ—the prominent part in the history of that life which women were permitted to take. I will single out two instances.

The first shall be that honoured and honourable woman, who was permitted in the providence of God to be the mother of the Lord. It is beautiful to observe how she brought up her only Child, how she loved Him, how she took care of Him, and how under her fostering care He condescended to grow up to be that which He ultimately became. And it is beautiful to see the affection with which her blessed Son regarded her; how gentle, how respectful He was to her, and how, as He hung upon the cross in agony, some of His very last words were devoted in filial affection to the purpose of providing His widowed mother a home. Read her history, so far as it is recorded for us: you will see in her the crown and glory of womanhood: you will perceive what honour God Himself has placed upon that sex to which you belong.

The other instance which I purpose to quote from Gospel history is also a Mary, but a very different one. You remember the poor woman who is described as one out of whom our Lord cast seven devils. We do not know much about the early history of that woman; it is always believed she belonged to the lowest, the saddest, the most heart-breaking class of women. If anything could touch our hearts, if anything could sadden our minds, it is the knowledge that it is possible for the glory and the beauty and the purity of womanhood to be draggled in the dirt as it is by that class to which I have referred. Mary Magdalen appears to have been one of that infinitely degraded class; but she felt her sin, and her sins were brought home to her by the loving words of Christ. He stooped down to her from the high position which He occupied as the Son of Man and as the Son of God. He gave her encouragement, He gave her hope, He gave her strength; and she by the grace of the Holy Ghost was enabled to seize, as it were, upon the hem of His garment and to be draggled up out of the filth into which she had fallen.

Here we have the two extremes of womanhood brought together in their common connection

with the Lord Christ. If the love of Christ could touch both the one and the other, who is there that may not be touched by that love? Who would not desire to say, "Lord Jesus Christ, let me touch Thee: my sins are many, but Thy love is great; let me touch Thee that I may be made perfectly whole"?

THE END.

Printed at the University Press, Oxford
By HORACE HART, Printer to the University

